



Guidance for Essential Businesses To Mitigate Spread of COVID-19 in the Workplace

Stay Home If You Are Sick!

EMPLOYERS SHOULD

- Maximize telecommuting options for as many employees as possible.
 - Require only essential employees to report physically to the workplace
- Urge employees to stay home when they are sick and maximize flexibility in sick leave benefits
- Consider staggering start and end times to reduce large numbers of people coming together at the same time
- Avoid meetings with more than 10 people. Have 6 feet of distance between attendees
- Consider regular health checks (e.g. temperature and respiratory symptom screening) of staff and visitors entering buildings when possible
- Cancel or postpone large conferences or events

ENHANCED HYGIENE

Everyone needs to follow increased hygiene measures.

- Wash your hands often with soap and water for at least 20 seconds
- Use alcohol-based hand sanitizer, if soap and water are not available
- Avoid close contact with other people
- Avoid touching, your eyes, nose and mouth
- Cover your cough or sneeze with a tissue

REGULAR CLEANING

AND ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTIONS

Exposure is thought to mostly occur through respiratory droplets, but surfaces can still transfer the virus from person to person.

- Regularly cleaning and disinfecting frequently touched surfaces such as doorknobs, tabletops, counter, phone, keyboards, fixture and elevators several times a day
- Placing sanitizing hand rub dispensers in frequently visited places (e.g. front entrances, elevators)
- Displaying posters promoting hand-washing and preventing the spread of illness
- Sick employees should be sent home immediately

STAY HOME IF SICK

- All sick employees should stay home
- Allow for flexible sick leave policies consistent with public health messaging and inform employees of changing sick leave policies
- A healthcare provider's clearance should not be required before a sick employee can return to work (unless the employee is returning to work before the required self-isolation period stated below is completed) as health care offices are likely very busy and unable to provide documentation right away



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Guidance for Essential Businesses with Suspected Exposure to COVID-19

Stay Home If You Are Sick!

Employees with confirmed diagnosis or suspected of COVID-19 should stay home and not come to work. To complete a COVID-19 self-assessment, visit readyharris.org or hcphtx.org

- Employees who are undergoing testing for COVID-19 or have been confirmed with COVID-19 must stay home and self-isolate. They may return to work when they meet all three of the following criteria:
 - At least 10 days have passed since symptoms first appeared
 - No fever for at least 24 hours (without the use of fever-reducing medications)
 - Symptoms have improved
- An employee that lives in the same household as a confirmed COVID-19 case must stay quarantined for 14 days AFTER the confirmed case of COVID-19 in their household has met the CDC recovery guidelines. Employee should self-monitor and seek medical care if symptoms develop
- If an employee suspects close contact directly with a case or someone under investigation for COVID-19, they must quarantine at home for 14 days after their last potential exposure and self monitor. If symptoms develop, the employee should seek medical care immediately
 - A potential exposure could be travel-related, contact to a known COVID-19 case, through a healthcare encounter, or through community interactions.
 - Close Contact is defined as being within 6 feet of a person suspected or confirmed to have COVID-19 for at least 15 minutes or within direct contact of infectious secretions (being coughed on).
- If an employee is confirmed to have COVID-19, employers should inform fellow employees of their possible exposure to COVID-19 in the workplace but maintain confidentiality as required by the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA).
- If an employee is confirmed to have COVID-19, their name, information and health status may be shared with the necessary public health agencies as required, to conduct contact tracing and to coordinate necessary follow-up actions.
- For facilities that have had persons suspected or confirmed with COVID-19 in the area, close off the areas used until the area can be cleaned and disinfected. See [CDC guidance for Environmental Cleaning and Disinfection](#).
- Employers should be sensitive to family needs by preparing for possible increased numbers of employee absences due to illness in employees and their family members, including lack of access to dependent care for children and elderly family members.
- In the case of a workplace outbreak, employers should consider suspending operations if a significant number of employees have been in close contact with a confirmed case or have been diagnosed with COVID-19.
- A healthcare provider's clearance is not required for employees who are sick to confirm illness or to return to work, unless the employee is returning to work before the required self-isolation period stated above is completed. Healthcare provider offices and medical facilities may be extremely busy and may not be able to provide such documentation in a timely way.



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Additional COVID-19 Resources for Essential Businesses

Stay Home If You Are Sick!

[DSHS Discontinuation of Home Isolation Guidance](#)

[DSHS Guidance for Employees and Managers](#)

[CDC Interim Guidance for Businesses and Employers](#)

[DSHS Minimum Recommended Health Protocols for Businesses and Services](#)

[CDC Guidance on Environmental Cleaning and Disinfection](#)

CALL CENTER INFORMATION RELATED TO COVID-19:

For Harris County Residents:
Harris County Public Health (HCPH)

www.hcphtx.org/COVID-19

www.ReadyHarris.org

832-927-7575

Monday – Saturday 8am - 5pm

Harris Health System

www.harrishealth.org

[Ask-My-Nurse](#)

713-634-1110*

experienced nurses are available to help 24/7

For City of Houston Residents:

Houston Health Department

www.HoustonHealth.org

832-393-4220*

[COVID-19 call center](#)

Monday-Saturday 7am – 4pm

For Fort Bend County Residents:

Fort Bend County Health & Human Services

www.fbchealth.org/ncov

281-633-7795

Monday to Friday from 9am to 6pm

and Sat-Sun from 10am to 2pm

If your results are positive and you live in

Harris County, you will be contacted by

HCPH epidemiology. You will receive a call

from 832-927-7575 and/or a text message

from 346-229-1960. If you live outside Harris

County, you will be contacted by your local

health department.



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